



1999 SMALL BUSINESS PROFILE: ALABAMA

By any measure, small businesses are critical to the economic well-being of Alabama. They create new businesses (and the new jobs that go with them); bring new and innovative services and products to the marketplace; and provide business ownership opportunities to diverse (and traditionally underrepresented) groups. These contributions are clearly established in the statistical portrait contained in this *Small Business Profile* compiled by the U.S. Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy.

Number of Businesses. In 1998 there were 87,300 businesses with employees, of which approximately 97 percent were small businesses (fewer than 500 employees). The number of small businesses with employees increased by 0.5 percent from 86,800 in 1997. There were 154,000 self-employed persons in 1998. While there is some overlap between these two groups (firms with employees and self-employed persons), a rough calculation puts the total number of businesses at 241,300. (Sources: U.S. Dept. of Labor, Employment and Training Administration; U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census; U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics)

Women-Owned Businesses. There were 47,000 self-employed women in 1998, representing 30.5 percent of total self-employment in the state. (Source: U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics)

Minority-Owned Businesses. According to the latest figures available, there were 17,432 minority-owned businesses in 1992, including 14,707 Black-owned businesses; 1,029 Hispanic-owned firms; and 1,777 firms owned by Asians, Pacific Islanders, American Indians, and Alaskan Natives. (Data may not add to the total because an owner may be a member of more than one minority group.) Of these businesses, 2,864 had employees, with employment totaling 12,600. (Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census)

Business Turnover. In 1998, 10,200 new employer firms were formed, 3.5 percent fewer than the number formed in 1997. There were 12,000 business terminations in 1998, a 2.3 percent increase from 1997. Business bankruptcies totaled 600 in 1998, a 31.2 percent decrease from 1997. (Sources: U.S. Dept. of Labor, Employment and Training Administration; Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts; U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census)

Employment. In 1996, businesses with fewer than 500 employees accounted for 774,600 employees, or 49.4 percent of the state's 1,568,800 private-sector non-farm employment. Small-business employment was concentrated in the following sectors: construction, agricultural services, and wholesale trade (see Table 1). Small businesses added a net total of 20,100 employees between 1995 and 1996, accounting for all of the total private non-farm employment growth in the state (see Table 2). The industries with the greatest percentage increases in employment among small businesses were: special trade contractors; eating and drinking places; and industrial equipment (see Table 3). (Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Statistics of U.S. Businesses)

Recent figures show that small firm job growth has continued. According to data prepared for the SBA's Office of

Advocacy by Cognetics, Inc., non-farm businesses added 147,500 net new jobs in the state between 1994 and 1998. In almost all industries, the most prolific job creators were firms with fewer than five employees. (Source: Cognetics, Inc.)

Small Business Income. There is no single measure of small business profitability because firms may operate as sole proprietorships, partnerships, or corporations. A partial measure — non-farm proprietors' income — totaled \$5.8 billion in 1998, an increase of 6.2 percent from \$5.5 billion in 1997. (Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce)

Finance. The SBA's Office of Advocacy ranked the 170 banks in the state that filed "call reports" with federal banking regulators on the basis of dollar value, number, and percentage of small commercial loans (under \$1 million) outstanding on June 30, 1998. (See Table 4 for the top-ranking small-business-friendly banks.) In addition to these banks, small businesses seeking loans should consider lenders that participate in the SBA's loan programs (so-called "preferred" or "certified" lenders); for a list of these lenders, call the Small Business Answer Desk at (800) 827-5722. Small businesses looking for qualified investors can also turn to the Access to Capital Electronic Network (ACE-Net). For more information, contact an ACE-Net operator at (205) 943-6750 or via e-mail at johns@provost.uab.edu.

To learn more about the Office of Advocacy's data, analyses, and research reports on small business, call (202) 205-6530 or visit the office's Web site at www.sba.gov/advo.

TABLES

Table 1. Employment by Industry and Firm Size, 1996 (thousands)

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Firm Size by Number of Employees</i>			<i>< 500 as Percent of Industry Total</i>
	<i>Total</i>	<i>1-19</i>	<i>1-499</i>	
Total non-farm employment	1,568.8	293.2	774.6	49.4
Agricultural services	10.5	5.9	8.6	82.1
Mining	10.5	0.8	2.9	27.6
Construction	97.4	36.6	83.5	85.7
Manufacturing	387.6	22.9	115.1	29.7
Transportation, communications, and utilities	86.5	11.6	34.7	40.2
Wholesale trade	92.1	24.0	66.3	72.0
Retail trade	337.3	66.6	163.3	48.4
Finance, insurance, and real estate	80.7	14.6	35.4	43.9
Services	465.5	109.9	264.2	56.7
Unclassified	0.6	0.5	0.6	100.0

Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

Table 2. Non-Farm Job Gains and Losses by Firm Size, 1995–1996 (thousands)

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Firm Size</i>	
		<i>1–19</i>	<i>1–499</i>
Gains:			
New establishments	81.1	28.6	47.8
Expanding establishments	156.7	44.7	96.5
Losses:			
Downsized establishments	(139.8)	(28.6)	(74.3)
Closed establishments	<u>(82.5)</u>	<u>(24.1)</u>	<u>(49.9)</u>
Net change in employment	15.6	20.6	20.1

Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Statistics of U.S. Businesses, 1999.

Table 3. Fastest Small Business Employment Growth by Industry, 1995–1996 (thousands)

<i>Industry</i>	<i>SIC</i>	<i>Small Business Employment 1996</i>	<i>Net Change*</i>	<i>Percent Change</i>
Total, all industries		774.6	4.2	0.5
Special trade contractors	1700	50.7	4.0	8.6
Eating and drinking places	5800	60.4	3.5	6.2
Industrial machinery and equipment	3500	11.5	0.6	5.4
Lumber and wood products	2400	22.3	1.1	5.0
Auto repair, services, and parking	7500	12.3	0.6	4.7

* Net change in Table 2 differs by definition from net change in Table 3. Table 2 uses dynamic data to track changes in individual businesses over time, whereas Table 3 uses static data to take snapshots of the universe of businesses at two different points in time.

Note: Table shows the top five industries. Includes only businesses with fewer than 500 employees. Industries with less than 1 percent change in small business employment are not included.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Statistics of U.S. Businesses, 1999.

Table 4. Small-Business-Friendly Banks, 1998

<i>Bank Name</i>	<i>Location</i>
First National of Wetumpka	Wetumpka
West Alabama Bank and Trust Company	Reform
Community Bank	Blountsville
Exchange Bank of Alabama	Altoona
Bank of Tuscaloosa	Tuscaloosa
Farmers and Merchant Bank	Piedmont
Peoples Bank and Trust Company	Selma
Covington City Bank	Andalusia
Bank of Vernon	Vernon
First Commercial Bank of Huntsville	Huntsville
First United Society Bank	Thomasville
Farmers National Bank	Opelika
Home Bank	Guntersville
Bank of Prattville	Prattville
United Bank	Atmore
Highland Bank	Birmingham
Commerce Bank of Alabama	Albertville
Colonial Bank	Montgomery
Southtrust Bank National	Birmingham

Source: U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy, from data collected by the Federal Reserve Board.

The full list of small-business-friendly banks can be found on the Office of Advocacy's Web site at www.sba.gov/advo/lending/inus2.html.